

JACKSONIANS

by Tom Barrans

JACKSONIANS: THE BUTTON

Jacksonians are small brass gilt buttons made from approximately 1825 to 1840, ranging in diameter size from about ½ to ¾ inch. They are one-piece rimmed, with an omega shank. They were made to be worn on a mans vest with the rim designed to facilitate the button hole. One-hundred and forty pictorial subject variations can be found, although some are very rare.

Later variations were made as a two-piece button which imitates a rimmed button. Some of these are hard to distinguish from a true Jacksonian. The test would be to hold the shank and turn the rim although these buttons are very old and the rim may not be loose. In the button world, these variations are termed "Jacksonian cousins." A former cousin is the plain faced, one-piece Jacksonian which now qualifies under the classification



Lion
Shell
Eagle
Deer

Eggs in Nest
Beehive
Dove
Dog

Eagle
Sheep
Squirrel
Horse

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as a Jacksonian. Since the NBS Classification is the result of the wishes of the collectors, there may come a time when cousins will all be accepted as Jacksonians and thus, if it appears to be one, it will be for competition.



Eagle

Fox

Most Jacksonians are backmarked with a quality description, although a few backs are blank. Some are identified as to maker. Makers include Leavenworth and Kendrick; Robinson, Jones and Co.; Robinson, Blackinton and Co.; Scoville, Richard Robinson and Co.

JACKSONIANS: THE DESIGNS

The era of “good feelings” in America began in 1815 after the Battle of New Orleans and the defeat of the British. Just as World War II was the second round of World War I, so too was the War of 1812 the second round of the American Revolution.

When the city of Washington was in flames it looked like the new nation might not survive. The Treaty of Ghent had been signed in December of 1814 and the war was soon to be over. Still, the January 1815 engagement was the confidence builder which led to pride and a feeling of Nationalism.

General Jackson was a national hero and thereafter associated with these “good feelings” among Americans. The concept of “Union” began to supersede the traditional feeling



**Wheat & Tools
Wheat
Flower**

**Clover
Cornucopia
Rose**

**Flower
Basket
Thistle**



Basket

Oak Leaf & Acorns

Grapes

Potted Tree

Tree



Washington

Jefferson

**Anchor with the words
Liberty & Union**

**Clapsed Hands
with Union & Strength**

of being a New Englander or Virginian. The states became diminished as the federal government grew in strength.

Jacksonian button designs reflect national pride and union. A bust of Washington and perhaps Jefferson is depicted. The Eagle is on a dozen Jacksonians. One which depicts an anchor with the words “Liberty” and “Union” seems like a political choice. Some who embraced states rights contended that liberty was more valuable than preserving the union.

Another button depicts hands clasping with the words “Union” and “Strength”. Their point was that New Yorkers could not defeat the British, nor could Virginians, but together the new republic could and did.

National pride did not rest on military victory alone but grew with the expansion of the country in population, geographical area, technological advance and the resulting prosperity. Jacksonian buttons picture much of this new technology and include the



**Clipper Ship
Steam Ship**

**Steam Locomotive
Steam Fire Wagon**



Soldier

Rider

Bow, Quiver & Arrows

Design

fast new clipper ships, steam locomotive, steam boat and fire wagon. Much of the progress was designed to bring agricultural products to markets in this country and abroad. The Erie Canal was a transportation miracle of the time. Cotton production rose with the invention of the Cotton Gin. Wheat production rose with the McCormick Reaper. Here again, we see the prosperity of agriculture reflected in the Jacksonian button – the wheat, various fruit and nut designs and the Cornucopia of Plenty.

Dozens of pictorial animal life also reflect the Jacksonian era. The bee and bee hive are shown to suggest industry and commerce. The squirrel may represent the virtues of thrift and savings. The clown and camel buttons may reflect the beginnings of the traveling circus in America. Hunting was still a major source of food and so the fox and deer are depicted along with the bow and quiver and horse and rider. The dog is represented because he is mans best friend and the fat cat is pictured for some unknown reason.

ANDREW JACKSON

It is reasonable to assume that Andrew Jackson, a fashionable gentleman of the time, may have worn a vest with these beautiful little buttons – although it is doubtful that they were then called Jacksonians.

Robert V. Remini wrote extensively on Jackson and his most thorough biography is a three volume edition. Later he abridged a one-volume paperback which is also filled with wonderful stories of the famous man.

Jackson was the seventh president and very different from his six predecessors. He is rightfully founder of the modern Democratic Party. He did not suffer from a formal education and was very passionate in his beliefs. He was distrustful of


Lyre
Crest

aristocratic old-money men who believed that only property owners should vote. Jackson was kind and chivalrous to women and children and was feared and respected by men. He studied the law and became an attorney, a prosecutor, a judge, a congressman, senator, general and president.

Jackson was a warrior of the American Revolution at age 13 and a hero as Major General in the Battle of New Orleans. He fought in many Indian campaigns as well as many duels in defense of his honor. He loved his wife, Rachel, all his life. Jackson owned hundreds of slaves. He had a violent temper and would rage with the most foul language.

His parents left Ireland and arrived in the new world in 1765. In March of 1767 Andrew Jackson was born and his father died. He learned to read and write in the rural tutorial system of Western Carolina. When he was nine years old and a copy of the Declaration of Independence came to his village, he was chosen to read it aloud.

Jackson had older brothers who served in the revolutionary army and he served as a courier in that cause. He was captured by the British and when an officer ordered him to clean his boots he refused. In a rage, the officer hit him with his sword cutting his head and hand, leaving physical and emotional scars for the rest of Jackson's life. By the end of the war for independence, Andrew Jackson had lost his entire family.

The Indian wars were very bloody as incidents followed fighting which lead to massacre and then revenge massacres. In 1813 following a battle with the Creek Indians, a ten month old Creek boy was found in the arms of his dead mother. Jackson told the women of the tribe to take care of the child and they replied, "He has no relations you should kill him." Jackson took the boy home and raised him as a son.

Jackson ran for President in 1824 and won the popular vote. He got the most electoral votes but failed to gain a majority and the election was decided in the congress. Since it did not seem fitting that a backwoods foul mouth general should be elevated to the office of President, the house elected Adams (the son of the first President Adams.) Jackson won by a large margin in 1828 and was re-elected in 1832. As President, he announced that the nation was debt free, the result of income from import taxes and the sale of land in the West.

During Jackson's presidential term there was a Supreme Court decision favoring the Cherokee vs. Georgia. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the opinion and upon hearing it, Jackson replied, "Marshall has made his decision now let him enforce it." Georgia lost the case and the Cherokee lost their homeland.

In 1845 Jackson died at The Hermitage, his beloved home in Tennessee. He was 78 years old.

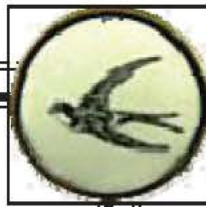
See also:

Jacksonians by H. Campbell Scarlett, NBB May, 1950.

Jacksonian Buttons by Kay Vocelle, NBS Junior Chairperson.

Various books on Andrew Jackson by Robert V. Remini.

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